



## Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia

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### REVIEW OF THE ACTION PLAN TO THE RAPTORS MOU – UPDATE ON PROGRESS

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#### Introduction

1. The Section 8 of the Action Plan to the Raptors MOU provides that at least two years before the Action Plan was due to come into effect [i.e. by November 2013] a full review of the action Plan would be undertaken and a revised version prepared for approval of the Signatories.
2. That timeframe was not met, but in the work plan approved by MOS2 in 2015, the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) was tasked with undertaking such a review. The TAG has so far not had capacity to do this; but consultancy support has now been secured to take it forward.
3. The suggested approach to this includes several ingredients, one of which is to issue a questionnaire survey to Signatories, other Range States, Cooperating Partners, other bodies and contacts, for return within a month or two. The information to be received will be supplemented by inputs from participants at the 3rd meeting of the TAG on 12-14 December.

#### What do we want to know?

4. Under paragraph 15 of the MOU, the Signatories expect “regular progress reports on implementing the strategies or equivalent measures” provided for under paragraph 15 of the MOU. Since no final strategies have yet been produced (just two currently exist in draft form), it has not yet been possible to generate any of these progress reports.
5. Under paragraphs 16 and 17 of the MOU, the Signatories expect the Coordinating Unit to prepare an “overview of progress in implementation of the Action Plan” before each MOS. Logically, progress in implementation of the MOU itself should be part of this too. “Implementation”, in principle, concerns:
  - Twelve actions that Signatories will endeavour to undertake under paragraph 8 of the MOU, in furtherance of the measures described in paragraph 7 of the MOU.
  - Nine actions defined under Section 4 of the Action Plan appended to the MOU.
  - The preparation by Signatories of “strategies or equivalent documents” under paragraph 12 of the MOU, which, according to section 5 of the Action Plan, will address the 34 “principal activities Signatories ought to undertake” as listed in six sections of Table 2 of the Action Plan (although two of those concern the preparation of strategies or equivalent documents, thus effectively repeating para 12 of the MOU).

### What have we asked previously?

6. Five enquiries have been conducted previously to elicit information on implementation progress, including questionnaires issued in advance of MOS1 and MOS2. Details of these are given in the Annex below. Respondents can be reassured that the proposed new exercise will take those earlier ones fully into account, and that it is not the intention to duplicate the work done on those earlier occasions.

### What is the wisest approach on this occasion?

7. A key priority issue to address is the limited progress (and obstacles to progress) with the national/regional strategies referred to above. Something similar to the three questions asked on this issue prior to MOS2 could be considered again; although some may feel that this has been well addressed already by the February and August 2018 enquiries mentioned in the Annex below.

8. The MOS2 questionnaire did not ask about overarching perceptions of opportunities, challenges and support needs, which it seems important to try to address with the present exercise. This could take a similar line to the section entitled “High-level summary of key messages” which was recently (23 October) agreed by the CMS Standing Committee to be included in the revised format for Party National Reports to the CMS COP. This section (modelled on an equivalent in the Ramsar Convention’s national report format) asks about “most successful aspects of implementation”, “greatest difficulties” and “main priorities for the future” (not dissimilar in fact to the approach taken to the “strategies” question for the Raptors MOU MOS2 mentioned above).

9. Potential ingredients for a very rapid and selective questionnaire to inform the present review have been considered, and this would be one option for the approach to take. On balance however it seems opportune instead to undertake a more comprehensive assessment leading into early 2019, as an updated review of the status of implementation of the Action Plan (and MOU) in the absence of an imminent Meeting of Signatories; and as a foundation for the planned review of the Action Plan itself. The suggestion is that this could follow closely the structure and content of the questionnaire issued prior to MOS2 in 2015, giving the benefit of familiarity with that process among many of the respondents, and comparability between one time period and another.

10. Effectively issuing a repeat survey necessitates a few adjustments to the way in which some of the questions should be asked, so the text will not be an exact duplicate of the one from 2015. The differences (as well as adding the “high level” questions mentioned above) may need to include changes to questions that asked about a specific time-period; changes to questions that asked about issues such as the status of strategies and the status of sites in Annex 3 (because in these cases the situation has evolved somewhat in more recent times); and consideration of how potentially to ask about changes to information that was previously reported.

### Suggested questions – overview

- What have been the most positive advances to date in implementing the MOU and/or Action Plan in your country (or for international organisations, in your field of operation)? (Describe up to three advances).
- What have been the greatest difficulties to date in implementing the MOU and/or Action Plan in your country (or for international organisations, in your field of operation)? (Describe up to three difficulties, and be as specific as you can).
- Which particular elements of MOU/Action Plan implementation have you committed to making the top priority for your own work in the next two years?

Action Plan: Activity 1 - Implementation of legal protection  
[To be added, following re-assessment of 2015 questionnaire]

Action Plan: Activity 2 - Protect and/or manage important sites and flyways  
[To be added, following re-assessment of 2015 questionnaire]

Action Plan: Activity 3 - Habitat conservation and sustainable management  
[To be added, following re-assessment of 2015 questionnaire]

Action Plan: Activity 4 – Raise awareness of problems faced by birds of prey and measures needed to conserve them  
[To be added, following re-assessment of 2015 questionnaire]

Action Plan: Activity 5 – Monitoring bird of prey populations, carry out conservation research and take remedial measures  
[To be added, following re-assessment of 2015 questionnaire]

Action Plan: Activity 6 – Supporting measures  
[To be added, following re-assessment of 2015 questionnaire]

### **Action requested**

TAG is requested to advise on the approach being taken to the review, and to contribute directly to the information on which it will be based.

## **Annex 1: Questions asked in previous consultations**

A questionnaire was issued to Signatories in advance of MOS1 in 2012 containing seven questions, relating to but not particularly structured to match any of the lists of twelve, nine, six or 34 issues mentioned above. A different questionnaire was issued in advance of MOS2 in 2015 containing 25 questions, this time structured to match the six implementation activity clusters defined in Table 2 of the Action Plan. In addition, in advance of MOS2, Signatories were sent three questions (plus some subsidiary/consequential questions) concerning the status of their preparation of strategies or equivalent documents under paragraph 12 of the MOU (and under actions 6.1 and 6.2 of Table 2 in the Action Plan). Five questions were circulated in February 2018, and then a further questionnaire was sent out in August 2018 (for response by the end of September) with 21 questions about the status of development of national/strategies and needs for support for this particular activity.

### **Questions circulated prior to MOS1 (2012)**

1. Are birds of prey species fully protected from all forms of unlawful killing (including poisoning, shooting, persecution), and unsustainable exploitation in your Country?
2. Have important raptor sites (e.g. where Category 1 species breed) and migration bottlenecks been identified, protected and managed for their benefit in your Country?
3. Have important raptor habitats been identified and are being managed sustainably in your Country?
4. Has any species protection or management programmes (including artificial nest schemes, sustainable harvest or reintroductions) been carried out in your Country? Please summarise completed and planned activities.
5. Have any co-ordinated raptor monitoring and research programmes been carried out in your Country to establish population trends, impacts of threats on raptors and to identify measures for their conservation and sustainable management? Please summarise completed and planned activities.
6. Have any awareness-raising activities been carried out about birds of prey, the threats that they face, and the measures that need to be taken to conserve them in your Country? Please summarise completed and planned activities.
7. Additional comments concerning the implementation of the Raptors MoU in your Country. Please use this space to highlight any major raptor conservation successes or concerns. Please list any specific needs for support to assist effective implementation in your Country.

### **Questions circulated prior to MOS2 (2015)**

#### *Action Plan: Activity 1 - Implementation of legal protection*

1. Are all 76 species of migratory birds of prey listed in the Raptors MoU granted full legal protection from killing and taking from the wild in your country?
2. Is there legislation in place which bans the use of exposed poison baits for predator control?
3. Is there legislation in place that requires all new electricity power lines to be 'bird friendly' in design and construction, and thereby minimise the risks of electrocution and collision?

*Action Plan: Activity 2 - Protect and/or manage important sites and flyways*

4. Are all the sites listed for your country in Table 3 of the Raptors MoU designated as protected areas or are they appropriately managed taking into account the conservation requirements of migratory birds of prey?
5. Are Regulations in place to ensure that Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) are obligatory for project proposals that may impact upon sites important for migratory birds of prey?
6. Have any Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA) been carried out in the last 5 years relating to major infrastructure developments within major flyways to identify key risk areas?

*Action Plan: Activity 3 - Habitat conservation and sustainable management*

7. Have any inventories been carried out to identify natural vegetation cover in former habitats (especially grasslands) in the range of globally threatened species listed in Category 1 of the Raptors MoU?
8. Have existing electricity power lines been surveyed to identify those that pose the greatest risk to migratory birds of prey?
9. Has a network of feeding stations been established and maintained for vultures and other scavenging birds of prey?
10. Is the conservation of migratory birds of prey integrated within the policies of sectors such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries, industry, tourism, energy, chemicals and pesticides?

*Action Plan: Activity 4 – Raise awareness of problems faced by birds of prey and measures needed to conserve them*

11. Have any public awareness programmes been developed and implemented to promote the importance of birds of prey and their conservation needs, including at bottleneck sites?
12. Have any awareness programmes been developed and implemented amongst other government departments to inform decision makers of the status, threats and conservation needs of migratory birds of prey?
13. Have any educational programmes and teaching resources been developed and implemented to inform children and students of the status, threats and conservation needs of migratory birds of prey?
14. Have any national training workshops been organised to improve skills in the monitoring of birds of prey?

*Action Plan: Activity 5 – Monitoring bird of prey populations, carry out conservation research and take remedial measures*

15. Have any systematic and coordinated monitoring programs been established for breeding populations, reproductive success and migration counts (spring and autumn) of birds of prey?
16. Have any guidelines or protocols been prepared and published concerning systematic or coordinated monitoring programmes for migratory birds of prey?

17. Have any assessments been made of the impacts of habitat loss on breeding, passage and wintering populations of migratory birds of prey, and measures identified to maintain their Favourable Conservation Status?
18. Have any assessments been made of the impacts of the use of toxic chemicals, including heavy metals (e.g. lead in shot and ammunition) on breeding, passage and wintering populations of migratory birds of prey, and measures identified to maintain their Favourable Conservation Status?
19. Have any programmes been established to monitor the impacts of power lines and wind farms on breeding, passage and wintering populations of migratory birds of prey, and measures identified to maintain their Favourable Conservation Status?
20. Have any reintroduction or restocking projects been investigated and implemented involving migratory birds of prey in accordance with IUCN Guidelines for Reintroductions and Other Conservation Translocations?
21. Have any captive breeding programmes been established involving any species of migratory birds of prey?
22. Are any species of migratory bird of prey legally harvested in your country?
23. Are there any disease surveillance programmes in place in your country involving species of migratory birds of prey?

*Action Plan: Activity 6 – Supporting measures*

24. Is a National or Regional Raptor Conservation Strategy being planned or in preparation to implement the aspects of the Action Plan of the Raptors MoU relevant to your country?
25. Have any Single or Multi-species National Action Plans been published or are in preparation for any species of migratory bird of prey?

**Questions on national/regional raptor conservation strategies, circulated prior to MOS2 (2015)**

1. Have you already begun preparing your National or Regional Raptor Conservation Strategy in the context of the Raptors MoU?  
If the answer is 'yes', what stage has the process reached?  
If 'no', what are the main challenges causing the delay?
2. Do you require any specific support or assistance to develop your Strategy?  
If yes, please specify your needs.
3. Are you planning to finalise and submit your National or Regional Strategy to the Coordinating Unit in advance of MoS2 in October 2015?

**Questions on national/regional raptor conservation strategies, circulated February 2018**

- Q1. Has your country begun developing a National or Regional Raptor Conservation Strategy? Yes/No.  
If yes, by which date do you anticipate submitting the completed document to the Coordinating Unit?
- Q2. [Question about planning of 3rd Meeting of Signatories – not copied here].
- Q3. [Question about planning of pre-MOS workshops – not included here].

- Q4. Do you believe that it's realistic to aim to have 75% of Signatories covered by a National or Regional Raptor Conservation Strategy by 31 December 2019? Yes / No.  
Do you anticipate that your country will be able to meet this deadline? Yes / No.
- Q5. Do you have any comments or ideas to assist in promoting development of National or Regional Raptor Conservation Strategies?

**Questions on national/regional raptor conservation strategies (and support needs) circulated in August 2018**

1. What steps have you already taken to develop the strategy? *(Please tick all boxes that apply and, where appropriate, complete the supplementary questions)*

A decision has been taken on the type of Raptor Conservation Strategy to be developed.

Regional (area covered):    National (name of country):

A lead agency and/or an individual has been selected who will be responsible for overseeing development of the strategy.    Name:    Job title and organisation:

A lead author(s) and/or key contributors/editors have been identified to draft the strategy.

Name:    Number of contributors/editors:

A small team or committee has been established (or representatives identified) to support the process.    Number of people:    Number of departments/organisations represented:

Some resources, including financial, are already identified to support the strategic development process.    Lead agency:    Resources (including funding amount) identified:

An outline timetable to develop the strategy has been established.

Start date:    Planned completion date:

The process to consult, finalise and secure formal official approval of the strategy has been agreed.

Level of official approval to be sought:

The species covered by the Raptors MoU that occur within the region/country have been identified.

A review of the Raptors MoU Action Plan has been undertaken to aid scoping out the task.

An outline threat analysis has been carried out to scope out key problems that are known or anticipated.

An initial list has been compiled of key stakeholders or groups who will need to be consulted and engaged.

At least one regional/national/local meeting or workshop is anticipated to be held during the process.    Type of gathering(s):    Number anticipated:

2. Which of these options offered by the Coordinating Unit would assist with the development of your Raptor Conservation Strategy? *(Please tick all boxes that apply and, where appropriate, complete the supplementary questions)*

Online planning telecom with the lead individual/author and/or steering team/committee.

Technical review of a draft Project Plan to develop the strategy, submitted to the Coordinating Unit.

Financial support to contribute to hosting a national or regional meeting/workshop.

Type of gathering(s):

Number of participants:

Funds sought (USD):

Technical advisor to attend/facilitate certain aspects of a national or regional meeting/workshop.

Financial support to sponsor attendance at a strategy development meeting/workshop hosted by another Signatory.

Technical guidance and review of key documents submitted to the Coordinating Unit during the process.

Technical review of the draft Raptor Conservation Strategy, submitted to the Coordinating Unit.

Other specific support needed to develop the Raptor Conservation Strategy. Please specify:

3. Are you already collaborating with another Signatory to develop your Raptor Conservation Strategy, or planning to do so? Yes. Please provide details: